



## Marty Block

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# Preventing Child Abuse



ASSEMBLYMEMBER

**Marty Block**

Dear Friend:

Child abuse is a serious problem in our society. Its long-term effect on children and their parents can be devastating. The California Legislature has designated April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. However, our goal of preventing child abuse is a year-round endeavor.

**Your awareness can prevent child abuse before it occurs.**

Nationwide, there are approximately three million reports of child abuse each year. Forty percent of abused children are under the age of five.

If you know of, or suspect, any case of child abuse, please report it to the proper authority. There are counseling and support services available to help parents reduce the stress that leads to family problems and to help parents and children who are victims of abuse deal with their emotions.

It is the right of every child to enjoy a healthy and happy life, and it is our responsibility as adults to protect children from any kind of physical or mental abuse.

For the sake of our children, let's work together to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Sincerely,

Marty Block  
Assemblymember, 78th District





# What is **child abuse**?

**Child Abuse** is any act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health and development.

**Physical Abuse:** which includes any act causing injuries such as:

- *Burns, bruises, abrasions, lacerations and scars.*
- *Head injuries, including internal injuries resulting in brain damage.*
- *Bite marks and whipping marks.*
- *Injuries to internal organs.*
- *Bone fractures.*

**Physical Neglect:** which includes inadequate food, shelter, clothing, protection, supervision, and medical and dental care.

**Sexual Abuse:** which includes incest, molestation and child pornography.

**Emotional Abuse:** and mental suffering, as evidenced by emotional turmoil, behavioral problems, withdrawal, depression, apathy, poor self-image and failure to thrive.

## Where to report **child abuse**...

**Report known or suspected child abuse to any of the following agencies:**

**County Child Welfare Services Offices**

**County of San Diego Child Welfare**

**Services Office ..... 858-694-5191**

## Who reports **child abuse**?

**Anyone can voluntarily report known or suspected child abuse** to a law enforcement, welfare or probation agency. However, California law requires certain persons to report suspected cases of abuse to a child protective agency immediately by telephone, with a follow-up written report within 36 hours.

**These Mandated Reporters include:**

- Child care custodians.
- Teachers, administrators and other school employees.
- Day camp and licensed daycare workers.

- Foster parents and employees of residential care facilities.
- Welfare and probation officers.
- Others who provide child care.
- Medical practitioners, such as physicians, nurses, psychologists, psychiatrists and dentists.
- Non-medical practitioners, such as public health employees, coroners, paramedics, counselors and religious practitioners who diagnose or treat children.
- Commercial film/photographic print processors.
- Employees of child protective agencies.

## When children say they have been abused...

- **Believe your child.** Children rarely lie about abuse, especially sexual abuse.
- **Commend your child** for telling you about the experience.
- **Convey your support for your child.** A child's greatest fear is that he/she is at fault and responsible for the incident.
- **Don't overreact.** Your attitude and assurance are critical signals to your child.
- **Report the suspected molestation** to a social services agency or the police.
- **Find specialized agency** that evaluates sexual abuse victims; hospital, child welfare agency, or mental health therapy group.
- **Search for physician with training** in detecting and recognizing abuse when seeking a special medical exam for your child.
- **Talk with other parents** to see if their children display unusual behavior or physical signs of abuse.
- **Remember: Taking action is absolutely critical.** Other children will continue to be at risk if nothing is done.